

# **CITY OF NEW SMYRNA BEACH**



## **COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

**FISCAL YEAR 2014 - 2015  
ANNUAL REPORT**

**CITY OF NEW SMYRNA BEACH**  
**CITY COMMISSION**

**JIM HATHAWAY, MAYOR**  
**JUDY REIKER, VICE-MAYOR**  
**JASON MCGUIRK, COMMISSIONER**  
**JAKE SACHS, COMMISSIONER**  
**KIRK JONES, COMMISSIONER**

**PAM BRANGACCIO, CITY MANAGER**

**COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

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**KATHERINE COOLEY**  
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**CRA STAFF**

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**RENEE RICHARDS, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**  
**DONNA GRAY-BANKS, COMMUNITY RESOURCE COORDINATOR**  
**(PART-TIME)**  
**HOLLY SMITH, MARKETING COORDINATOR (PART-TIME)**  
**FRANK GUMMEY, CRA ATTORNEY**

## **A Brief History**

In the mid-1980's representatives of business and government in New Smyrna Beach recognized a need to address the declining business climate in the older core commercial areas of the City. The City Commission appointed a task force of business and property owners to examine the economic condition of the City's commercial core and recommend actions to address the problem. The Downtown Redevelopment Task Force met in late 1984 and early 1985 and recommended that the City Commission establish a Community Redevelopment Agency under the provisions of Florida Statutes Chapter 163. The City Commission accepted the recommendation and directed that work begin on the establishment of the agency.

Over the next several months the task force and consultants developed a finding of necessity that established the justification for the district, delineated the district boundaries and prepared a master plan to guide the redevelopment efforts in the district. The City Commission adopted these documents in July of 1985, thus establishing the New Smyrna Beach Community Redevelopment Agency.

Total assessed value in the district significantly increased during the 30 years that the CRA was in operation.

Since 1985 the CRA has made major capital investments to improve the CRA area and encourage private investment. The CRA began by acquiring land and developing parking lots to support the existing business areas. These modest first efforts were followed by large-scale park and streetscape projects. The CRA has also invested in smaller improvements that have helped yield significant results.

In 1995 the agency undertook a review of its original redevelopment plan along with an overall review of agency operations. After a period of study involving the City Commission and CRA Board, and with public participation, an updated redevelopment plan was issued.

In 2000 a major expansion of the district boundaries was made, expanding to an area of the Historic Westside. The CRA conducted a finding of necessity to qualify the additional land area and prepared an amendment to the Redevelopment Plan to identify projects and other improvements that were needed in the area. The City Commission approved the expansion.

In 2009 the CRA again began updating the Master Plan through a process involving numerous meetings with citizen and business owners. The updated plan was approved in 2010 and contains a wide range of projects and recommendations. The preparation of the plan included data collection and technical studies on several specific topics, including the demand for parking spaces and parking lot capacity in the Canal Street and Flagler Avenue areas and two market analyses to determine the types of businesses recommended for recruitment to the CRA area.

The CRA has now sunset and much has been accomplished. It is widely acknowledged that the historic commercial areas – Flagler Ave and Canal St – have achieved their revitalization objectives. In addition, many capital projects have been completed.

# Map of the Community Redevelopment Agency District



## Summary of Activities

### • CRA Master Plan Update

CRA activities are based on the recommendations of the CRA Master Plan Update. The Plan was approved in 2010 and it provided a vision for CRA activities in the final 5 years of the CRA until it sunset in 2015. The plan contained the following “strategic frameworks”:

- Strengthen the Neighborhoods
- Support the Main Streets
- Create a Health Care District
- Broaden the Tourism Market
- Enhance the Green and Blue Infrastructure
- Connect the Community

The Executive Summary of the Master Plan Update notes that, “Regarding action plan initiatives, the most significant ‘new idea’ coming out of the Master Plan process is simply the recognition that bricks and mortar public infrastructure alone are not enough to facilitate redevelopment – particularly in a challenging and competitive environment. ‘Build it and they will come’ is often misrepresented as an end to itself. Updated public infrastructure, while very important, often serves only to ‘set the table’ – creating a desirable address for investment. There are critically important additional steps to actually leverage the investment and create activity. Successful redevelopment authorities take an active role in bringing ‘Feet to the Street’, creating positive energy while directly facilitating investment through engagement and collaboration with private interests.”

The 2010 CRA Master Plan Update was a key component in the achievements of the New Smyrna Beach CRA in the final 5 years of operation. For example, the recognition of “Opportunity Sites” led to the creation of a new program that facilitated development at a number of key sites, including the Pennysaver and Badcock buildings on Canal Street. The renovation of these buildings encouraged privately funded improvements in other buildings in the Canal St area.

The Opportunity Site grant program was recognized with an “Outstanding Public/Private Partnership Award” from the Surfcoast Chapter of the Florida Planning and Zoning Association in 2014 (see awards section of this report).

### **New Smyrna Beach CRA Master Plan Update - 2010**



## Capital Improvement Projects

- **North Causeway Improvements**

The North Causeway is an FDOT road that connects the Canal St, historic mainland downtown with Flagler Ave., the historic beachside downtown. The CRA Master Plan Update lists a capital project for the right of way area, and planning for this project took place during FY 2013-2014. Funding was secured from the Florida Department of Transportation in the amount of \$500,000, which matched \$500,000 in CRA funds. A consulting engineer was hired and the project scope includes “bold landscaping”, new lighting, some additional parking, an improved crosswalk, and two new medians. This project began construction in 2015 and is scheduled for completion in 2016. Below is a photo-enhanced picture that envisions the completed project.



- **Alonzo “Babe” James Community Center Expansion**

Planning and the initiation of construction of an expansion of the Alonzo “Babe” James Community Center at 201 N. Myrtle took place in Fiscal Year 2013-2014. The 15,244 square foot building includes a large meeting room, a small meeting room, computer room, gym, and kitchen and is being expanded with an additional 1,380 square feet. City staff discussed the expansion project with residents at the Historic Westside Community meetings, and residents voted to approve the expansion project. The expansion provides a larger meeting room, which will increase the opportunity for local caterers to serve larger groups. The larger meeting room space was made available by moving the offices to an expanded building footprint at the front entrance to the building. The front entrance was also designed to enhance building security.

Construction of the expansion began in 2014 was completed in April, 2015.



**Ground breaking 8-8-14**



**Exterior 3-27-15**

- **Third Ave Gateway Feature**

As a part of the City’s wayfinding signage program, staff worked with representatives of the Third Ave merchants group during fiscal year 2013-2014 to design a sign to be installed in the FDOT right of way at the northeast corner of Third Ave and Peninsula Dr. The project was completed in 2015 with a Welcome sign that features the Wayfinding “wave” logo, and landscaping.



- **Riverside Park Improvements**

Riverside Park has been the focal point for a number of CRA projects, including improvements to the seawall and park lighting. As a part of the seawall improvements, in the 2013-2014 fiscal year staff began studying the playground immediately adjacent to the seawall walkway for replacement. Project construction was completed in 2015.



## Grant Projects

- **The HUB**

In FY 2011-2012, the Independent Business Move In program was amended to include “non-profit cultural arts business consortia”. There was one applicant under the program amendment and a facility called “The HUB” opened in 2012 in a sizable commercial space in the downtown area that had been vacant for over a year. The grant provided a partial rent payment every month. The HUB has leases with over 60 artists who display their work in the facility. Some of the artists also have rental work space and visitors can view art being created, or attend concerts or classes on the premises. The program continued through fiscal year 2013-2014 and was then amended to provide \$40,000 towards the purchase of the building by The HUB. The purchase was completed in May, 2015.



- **Property Improvement Grant Awards**

The CRA made property improvements grant awards to ten grantees in December, 2014, and nine grants were accepted. The grantees had a limited amount of time to make the improvements, and the funding provided was less than requested in most cases. The grant-funded work is now complete. The addresses for the grant awards are as follows:

- 392, 394, 396 Flagler Ave (Om Bar Building)
- 470 N Causeway
- 400 E Second Ave (Norwood’s Restaurant)
- 409 Mary Ave (Southern Express Café)
- 151 Canal St (Bob’s Automotive)
- 207 N Atlantic Blvd (Oceanview Condominiums)
- 405 Magnolia (residence)
- 206 Mary Ave (Turning Tide Acupuncture)
- 604 Downing (residence)

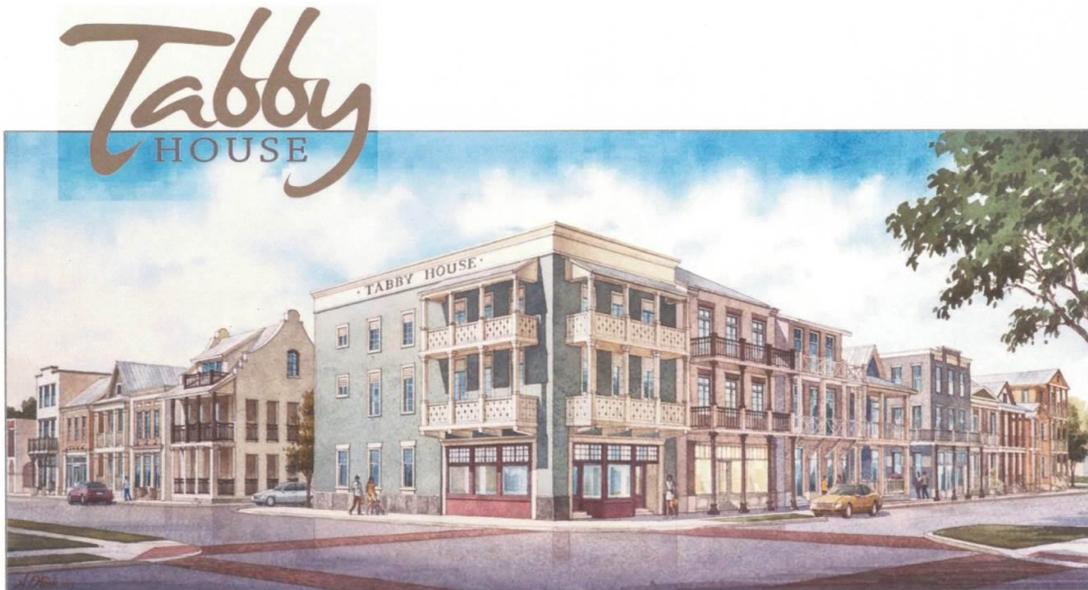
- **The Tabby House project - 103 Faulkner**

CRA staff prepared a “Request for Proposals” (RFP) for 1.4 acres of City property at this location in fiscal year 2012-2013. This site is in the block immediately south of City Hall and formerly was the site of tennis courts, shuffleboard courts, and a recreation building. Those facilities were demolished, and the only improvement left on the site is the former city fire station. (A new fire station has opened near the western terminus of Canal St on SR 44.)

There was one response to the RFP and in fiscal year 2013-2014 the City Commission approved a contract with that respondent, the White Challis Redevelopment Co. The contract required the developer to pay the appraised price for the property at closing, and the CRA would provide an Opportunity Site grant towards the cost of the infrastructure for the site. Closing on the sale was completed in 2015. Site work began in 2015, and continues in 2016.

The planned development calls for approximately 17 townhouse units which are designed to allow a commercial use of the first floor – typically a professional office for the resident. A two car garage for each unit is accessible from an alley at the back of the buildings.

The former fire station building was sold and is being renovated to house an optical store (there are no CRA funds involved in the renovation project).



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- **Partnership with the New Smyrna Beach Housing Authority**

The City and the CRA assembled property in the area of Railroad Ave and Dimmick St. for the development of affordable housing. A house in the Southeast corner of the property (pictured below) was demolished.



**Before**



**After**

**Railroad Avenue property before demolition and construction of new homes**

**Railroad Avenue property after construction of new homes**

In fiscal year 2012-2013 the CRA issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the development of affordable housing on this site. The only respondent was the New Smyrna Beach Housing Authority, and a contract with the Housing Authority was approved by the City Commission in fiscal year 2013-2014. The contract provided the conveyance of the property to the Housing Authority, and Housing Authority staff began the preparation of plans and a bid package. The project schedule provided that 4-6 housing units would be constructed, and these units would be leased to eligible families and managed by the Housing Authority.

In the first quarter of fiscal year 2014-2015, the Housing Authority staff requested a contract revision to change the configuration of the housing units, from 6 single family dwellings to 2 single family dwellings and 2 duplexes. One single family unit and the two duplexes would be located on Railroad Ave, and the second single family unit would be located on Julia St. in the same block as the other units. The CRA and City Commission approved this revision, which was due to a requirement from another funding agency for the project to include an additional feature: a sound barrier wall, to be located on the east side of the property, to shield noise from the railroad tracks across the street.

Construction of this project began in FY 2014-2015 and is scheduled to be completed in April, 2016. The CRA, as a part of the contract with the Housing Authority, has provided \$271,979 in grant funds towards this project.

- **Partnership with Southeast Volusia Habitat for Humanity**

CRA staff and representatives of Southeast Volusia Habitat for Humanity have been working for several years to find ways to combine Habitat programs (such as “Brush with Kindness”) with CRA programs.

In the 2012-2013 fiscal year the CRA provided a grant to Habitat for improvements to five homes on Mary Ave. These improvements were for exterior repairs.

As a result of that experience, Habitat representatives and CRA staff prepared a program revision, adopted by the CRA and City Commission, to allow up to \$10,000 in CRA grant funds (rather than \$5,000) for home improvements, and extending the list of the types of repairs and improvements that would be eligible for grant funding.

City and CRA staff worked during fiscal year 2013-2014 to identify candidates for the revised program.

In fiscal year 2014-2015, two activities were scheduled: one house at 324 N. Myrtle Ave that was selected to be improved through the revised program, as well as a duplex that was constructed at 325 Sheldon St. The CRA and City Commission approved a second program revision on December 9, 2014 to allow the building of a duplex as an eligible grant activity. The CRA allocated \$40,000 towards the construction of the duplex and \$10,000 towards the renovation of the house on N. Myrtle Ave.

Both the improvements to the house at 324 N Myrtle Ave. and the building of the duplex at 325 Sheldon St. are now complete.



**Completed Duplex at 325 Sheldon St.**

- **Mini-Park at US 1 & Canal St**

The property on the SW corner of US 1 and Canal St. has been vacant for over 30 years. Previously on the site was a fast food restaurant that burned down and was partially demolished over thirty years ago.



**Before the Mini-Park**

At the urging of Canal St merchants, the CRA and the property owner entered into a lease. The CRA contributed grant funds to the merchants' group to redevelop the property as a "mini-park" with landscaping, creating an aesthetically-pleasing entryway feature to both the east and west Canal St. areas.



**After: Completed Park.**

## AOB Site

- **Request for Proposals (RFPs) – AOB Site**

The North Causeway has become an area of increased development activity in recent years. The City-owned property at 160 N Causeway (also called the “AOB” site, for “Administrative Office Building”), has interesting development potential due to its location on the Inter-Coastal Waterway, and its street frontage between Flagler Ave and the Canal St area. It is one of the “Opportunity Sites” identified in the 2010 CRA Master Plan, with the site is included in a conceptual plan for “North Causeway Enhancements.”

The City Commission directed staff to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the property in fiscal year 2014-2015. This was the fourth RFP issued in recent years – the responses to the previous RFPs were not accepted.



There were two respondents to the FY 2014-2015 RFP, and the City Commission directed staff to begin negotiations with the representatives of the response entitled Coronado Island Marine Village (CIMV). At the end of the fiscal year City staff is continuing negotiations with representatives of the CIMV respondent. (Note: there are no CRA funds involved in this project.)

## **Brownfield Program**

- **Implementation of the EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant: Partnering with the Cities of Edgewater and Oak Hill for a second Brownfield Assessment Grant**

CRA staff worked with staff members from the City of Edgewater and the City of Oak Hill to apply for a Brownfield Assessment grant. The grant was awarded in May, 2013 and an engineering consultant was selected. Eight sites were selected and processed for environmental studies within the City of New Smyrna Beach in 2014 and 2015, with a number of additional sites being considered. Staff has also made a presentation on the program for the Board of Realtors and has mentioned the program every month in the City's Economic Development newsletter.

## **Significant Programs/Activities**

- **“Branding the District”**

One of the recommendations in the 2010 CRA Master Plan Update was “Branding the District”, recognizing that there is a circle of significant streets and bridges that link all of the “character places” within the CRA district. The ‘circle’ can be marketed as a place for shopping, festivals and events. In addition, the new “brand” will need to be marketed. Marketing, Branding and Hosting Events are critical to historic downtowns – to create activity in emergent areas and to compete with much larger and more organized advertising campaigns of the national retailers found in suburban centers. These efforts needed to include the marketing of available sites and a comprehensive calendar of events. This was a new effort, since the Flagler Avenue, Canal Street and Third Avenue areas are three distinct locations that had previously marketed themselves independently.

The CRA hired a qualified marketing consultant who prepared a marketing plan. In the 2011-2012 fiscal year the marketing plan was implemented with the logo below, advertising the commercial areas of the CRA as the NSB Waterfront Loop. Marketing activities continued pursuant to the plan.

The name and logo also appear on the Wayfinding signage. Marketing activities in the 2014-2015 included:

- The maintenance of a website, the [nsbwaterfrontloop.com](http://nsbwaterfrontloop.com), and a Facebook page;
- The management of an active marketing campaign that includes radio ads; and
- Press releases for significant events.



- **Historic Westside Community Meetings**

CRA staff attends and participates in community meetings for the Historic Westside. These meetings are held every other month at the Alonzo “Babe” James Community Center. Staff makes reports on projects and invites citizen input.

- **Parking**

The adequate provision of parking in the Flagler Avenue area was identified as a work task in the 2010 CRA Master Plan Update. Since the adoption of the Master Plan Update, the CRA has provided a grant to build a parking lot (Flagler Dunes), improved the parking at the Flagler Beachfront Pavilion, opened the Coronado Civic Center lot for public parking, and leased a 65 space parking area at a church (to make up for the loss of approximately 30 parking spaces in the lot across the street where the Hampton Inn and Suites now stands). A parking lot has been constructed with the Esther Street Beachfront Park, and another beachfront lot is planned for future construction on S. Atlantic (CRA funds are not involved in that project).

During the 2013-2014 fiscal year, the contract for the parking lot leased from the church across from the hotel on Flagler Ave, was re-negotiated to include an extension of the lease until 2021.

### **Exemption of the Hospital District**

At their regular meeting on June 22, 2010 the City Commission voted to exempt the Southeast Volusia Hospital District from participation in the funding of the CRA. The Southeast Volusia Hospital District and the Bert Fish Medical Center continue to be important partners with the CRA in redevelopment efforts. FY 2010-2011 was the first year the funding exemption took place, with the continuation of the exemption in the subsequent fiscal years - including FY 2014-2015.



**Bert Fish Medical Center**

- **Partnerships**

Partnerships are one of the keys to CRA success, and the CRA maintained a close working relationship with many organizations. Volusia County was the primary partner for the CRA. In addition to funding, Volusia County's Economic Development Department provided assistance in the expansion and retention of businesses. Team Volusia was a partner for business recruitment, and a portion of the annual payment for participation in Team Volusia came from the CRA. Team Volusia also provided information that was valuable to redevelopment efforts.



**New Smyrna Beach Utilities Commission**

## **WE APPRECIATE OUR PARTNERS!**

- ❖ Volusia County
- ❖ Volusia County Department of Economic Development
- ❖ Team Volusia
- ❖ Bert Fish Hospital and Southeast Volusia Hospital District
- ❖ NSB Utilities Commission
- ❖ Southeast Volusia Chamber of Commerce
- ❖ Canal Street Historic District
- ❖ Merchants of Flagler Hospitality Group
- ❖ Third Avenue Merchants Group
- ❖ Historic Westside Community
- ❖ Southeast Volusia Advertising Authority
- ❖ Daytona State College Small Business Development Center
- ❖ Career Source Flagler/Volusia
- ❖ Other residential, civic and business organizations

- **Awards**

The New Smyrna Beach CRA won a number of prestigious awards, including:

- Florida Trust for Historic Preservation, Inc., Florida Preservation Award: Southeast Volusia Chamber of Commerce Exterior Restoration, New Smyrna Beach, 2012
- Florida Redevelopment Association, Roy F. Kenzie Award, Marketing and Communications, 2013
- Surfcoast Chapter, Florida Planning and Zoning Association
  - Outstanding Environmental Design: Esther Street Beachfront Park, 2013
  - Outstanding Public/Private Partnership: Hampton Inn & Suites, 2013
  - Outstanding Public/Private Partnership: Opportunity Site Grant Program, 2014

## **Conclusion**

The New Smyrna Beach CRA has been a catalyst in the successful revitalization of the Flagler Ave and Canal St historic downtowns, and has provided a number of well-received and appreciated capital projects throughout the district. The success of the CRA has been accomplished in concert with the CRA's many partners, including the property owners who applied for, accepted, and implemented CRA grants (and complied with the extensive grant program requirements). These special property owners demonstrated their belief in the vision of a revitalized historic area. With the sunset of the CRA, New Smyrna Beach residents and visitors alike now enjoy the benefits of those efforts!

**Financial Statements Attached**

